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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 2 October 1991, at 10 a.m.

President:	Mr. SHIHABI	(Saudi Arabia)
later:	Mr. TRAXLER (Vice-President)	(Italy)

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by

Ms. Thorpe (Trinidad and Tobago)
Mr. Al-Khalifa (Bahrain)
Mr. Levy (Israel)
Mr. Rahman (Bangladesh)

Address by Mr. Yon Hyong Muk (Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Ms. THORPE (Trinidad and Tobago): It gives me great pleasure, Sir, to extend to you and to your country, Saudi Arabia, the warm congratulations of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session. At this time, when we are required to take major decisions on the future of our Organization, your own considerable diplomatic experience affords us a quality of leadership which will assuredly enhance our debates and guide our deliberations to a successful conclusion.

My Government is also pleased to commend the work of your predecessor, Mr. Guido de Marco of Malta, whose diplomatic skills, knowledge and efficiency were at all times evident during the conduct of the forty-fifth session.

Trinidad and Tobago applauds the current advances towards universal membership in the United Nations, with the historic admission to this Organization last month of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea, as well as the Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. As a small archipelagic State, Trinidad and Tobago is also particularly pleased with the admission to membership of the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia. On behalf of the Government and people of Trinidad and Tobago, I extend warm and sincere congratulations to all the new Members. Their admission is testimony to the profound and unprecedented changes which have taken place in the international system.

In many ways the international community seems poised on the brink of what could be a brave new era. The dramatic and far-reaching changes of the

(Ms. Thorpe, Trinidad and Tobago)

past few years have radically transformed the political and economic contours of the international landscape. In many parts of the world stern and rigid authoritarian systems, the legacy of ideologies which placed the interests of the State and of ruling élites before the social well-being of the majority, has been weakened and brushed aside.

(Ms. Thorpe, Trinidad and Tobago)

They have been vanquished by one of the most powerful and enduring urges of mankind - the desire to enjoy fundamental rights and freedoms. It is this urge that has conferred upon the present period one of its most appealing characteristics, namely, widespread democratization and liberalization.

One of the major consequences of these unprecedented changes has been a dramatic improvement in the international political climate. Antagonism and hostility are increasingly being replaced by cooperation and coordination. This has been most vividly reflected in the new effectiveness of the United Nations. Freed of the constraining fetters of great-Power confrontation, the world body has been in a position to play a central and constructive role in international affairs. The United Nations is finally becoming the dynamic international mechanism envisaged by its founding fathers.

The Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, and his representatives must be congratulated on the active and influential role they have played in so many areas of tension - Cambodia, Western Sahara, El Salvador - and on their expert handling of a number of sensitive issues, such as the release of hostages in the Middle East, the aftermath of the war in the Gulf and the Middle East question.

These important and positive developments should encourage our hope in a brighter future. Our optimism is, however, tempered by the number and the complexity of the challenges that continue to burden the international community, some of long standing, others of more recent vintage.

Foremost among them is the increasing disparity between rich and poor nations. After decades of development efforts the problems of widespread poverty and deprivation that afflict the majority of the world population continue to be a burning issue. Poverty in itself is a threat to

(Ms. Thorpe, Trinidad and Tobago)

international peace and security. Its eradication, therefore, should constitute a major part of the peacemaking mandate of the United Nations.

Changes in economic and political ideology are resulting in a fresh approach to economic policies in the developing world. The new economics of development is becoming increasingly pragmatic. Greater importance is being accorded to the balance and interaction between the market, the State and the private sector. Similarly, economic development is increasingly being measured by the improvement and the enrichment of the lives of people and not by impersonal economic indicators. Authentic development, it is recognized, must be sustainable, multi-dimensional and people-oriented.

Efforts at the national level to redress the adverse economic situation cannot succeed unless there is a less hostile international economic environment. The assistance of the international community through the provision of aid, loans and investment funds is also crucial. In this context we hope that the efforts being made to facilitate the integration of the Eastern European countries into the international economy will not take place to the detriment of the developing world.

The economic problems of the developing world are compounded by the burden of external debt. This issue needs to be urgently and comprehensively addressed. The absence of a durable solution remains a blight upon the efforts of those countries to achieve growth and development. Several debt-alleviation proposals have been advanced over the past few years. However, the stock of debt continues to grow and has now attained the staggering figure of $1.2 trillion. The massive burden and the repayment and servicing trauma that it has engendered will not only continue to impose severe hardship on the people of the developing countries, but will sharpen

(Ms. Thorpe, Trinidad and Tobago)

the disparity between rising affluence in some parts of our international community and increasing chronic poverty in others. In the developing countries themselves, the drain of resources created by the external debt and service payments contributes to heightened social tensions, jeopardizing respect for human rights and the preservation of democracy in those countries.

Trade and trade opportunities remain pivotal in any effort to reactivate the economies of the developing world. In those countries structural adjustment has been widely utilized in an effort to create economic structures that are rational, viable and self-sustaining. However, we are faced with a paradoxical situation. Competitive exports resulting from the structural-adjustment programmes and economic diversification that the developing countries were urged to undertake are being barred from the market-places in the North by a new wave of protectionism. Moreover, this coincides with a period of historically low commodity prices. These developments are very grave for developing countries and particularly for small economies in which production possibilities are limited by size and resource endowment.

Trinidad and Tobago is firmly of the view that the most effective way to address the trade problem is through the multilateral negotiations taking place in the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). However, commitments made by members during negotiations must be honoured and the special situation and needs of developing countries must be taken into account in the present effort to reach agreement on outstanding issues.

The emergence of economic megablocs could very well be a mixed blessing. Should they become inward-looking, erecting import barriers, new problems

(Ms. Thorpe, Trinidad and Tobago)

could arise. However, if they function as nuclei of genuine free trade they could also strengthen the pillars of the multilateral system. A successful outcome of the Uruguay Round will indeed assist in ensuring that the emergence of these large trading blocs will have a positive effect on the global economy.

Unrestricted access to markets in the developed countries will undoubtedly facilitate the creation of an environment that is more propitious for developing countries. A crucial variable in the development matrix, nevertheless, is science and technology for development. Science and technology define the gap between developed and developing countries, between one world that basks in affluence and another that is mired in poverty and deprivation.

Trinidad and Tobago notes with concern the diminution of resources directed by the United Nations towards science and technology for development. Developing countries, hamstrung as they are by limited resources, rely heavily on the work and activities of international institutions like the United Nations. It is imperative that science and technology be designated a major priority area in the allocation of resources for development by this body.

The challenge of protecting our environment is an issue to which the international community is paying increased attention. In both the developed and the developing world there is a keener perception today of the need to integrate ecological considerations into economic planning in order to achieve sustainable development.

My delegation perceives a need, however, to shift the ongoing debate from its concentration upon issues that appear pertinent only to the developed world to a focus which takes the entire global community into account.

(Ms. Thorpe, Trinidad and Tobago)

The environment is par excellence a global issue. As such, addressing it requires global cooperation. This underlines the importance of the need for coordinated international responses to environmental problems. The forthcoming United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED), which will take place in Brazil in 1992, will play a vital role in this regard.

(Ms. Thorpe, Trinidad and Tobago)

In a related process, island developing States, aware of the grave threat that climate change and sea-level rise may pose to their very existence, have already formed themselves into the interregional Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) and have undertaken a critical coordinating role in the climate negotiations to be completed before the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development.

At this time of general economic decline in many countries, the international community's attention and commitment to the resolution of the consequent social ills are crucial. Social issues must of necessity assume greater importance on the international agenda.

The enormous challenges facing small and large States alike in their fight against domestic and international criminal activities, as well as the dangerous interlinkages between the various forms of organized transnational crimes, such as terrorism and international drug trafficking, dictate that comprehensive, concerted and practical prescriptions be formulated to alleviate these problems.

The illicit use of and trafficking in drugs are recognized as a social plague and a threat to the international community. This scourge is of a transnational character, and the response of the international community must, in like manner, emphasize international cooperation and collaboration and the provision of adequate financial resources. Trinidad and Tobago supports the consolidation of United Nations activities within the new international drug control programme. This development should allow for a coherent and integrated strategy. The new institution, however, will be able to make an impact on the well-organized and lucrative trade in death and degradation only if it is provided with adequate human and financial resources.

(Ms. Thorpe, Trinidad and Tobago)

Similarly, given the grave effects world-wide of other aspects of international criminal activity, we believe that the United Nations must adopt a concerted approach to crime prevention and criminal justice. As a member of the Inter-governmental Working Group on the Creation of an Effective International Crime and Criminal Justice Programme, which met in Austria last August, Trinidad and Tobago fully approves the recommendation that a new United Nations crime-prevention and criminal-justice programme be established to provide, inter alia, practical assistance for States in their fight against national and transnational crime. Like other small States, we can ill afford to continue diverting limited resources from development programmes and projects into the fight against a growing tide of criminal activity. My delegation therefore calls on this Assembly to designate the proposed new criminal-justice programme as a priority within the 1992-97 medium-term plan.

In his address to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. A. N. R. Robinson, observed:

> "Neither a free State nor a free world can long endure without adequate safeguards for the rule of law." (A/45/PV.20, p. 31)

Trinidad and Tobago welcomed the decision to declare this final decade of the twentieth century the United Nations Decade of International Law. We were also encouraged to find that areas of international law that might be ready for progressive development and codification are being identified.

My delegation strongly believes that the elaboration of a code of crimes against the peace and security of mankind, the codification of international criminal law and the establishment of an international criminal court are tasks that should be tackled very early in the decade.

(Ms. Thorpe, Trinidad and Tobago)

At its forty-third session the International Law Commission carefully examined draft proposals for the establishment of an international criminal court. Trinidad and Tobago has long argued that such a court would be an effective adjunct to domestic administrative and judicial arrangements, and would provide greater protection for the security and sovereignty of States, particularly small States. Questions relating to jurisdiction and the institution of criminal proceedings continue to be debated. However, the real progress that has already been made in elaborating the draft Code of Crimes Against the Peace and Security of Mankind should encourage States to give serious consideration to the proposals and comments of the International Law Commission and facilitate the drafting, at the next session of that body, of a statute for an international criminal court.

I wish to turn now to an item which the hectic events of the last few months may have removed from our consciousness, but which Trinidad and Tobago still considers to be of vital importance. I refer to the desire for self-determination that some small States still nurture. At this pivotal time in history, when the struggle for freedom is bearing fruit in Europe and elsewhere, we should do well to remember that, despite the progress made in the area of decolonization, there remain a number of small dependencies, especially in the Caribbean and in the Pacific, that have not had the opportunity to shape their own destiny.

It is essential that these States be accorded the respect that comes with the right to choose how they will face the future. They need to know that their hopes and aspirations are still taken seriously by this body. And, to facilitate the making of wise choices, they need the breadth of sound information on which such choices must be based.

(Ms. Thorpe, Trinidad and Tobago)

Trinidad and Tobago sincerely hopes that new life will be injected into the decolonization debate and that all the administering Powers will return to participate actively in the work of the Committee concerned, bringing with them their wealth of knowledge and experience of the interlinkages between economy, security and independence in the modern world. By doing so they will surely assist the United Nations in carrying out its special responsibilities to these territories.

The recent successes of the United Nations in some of the most volatile regions of the world should not lull us into a false sense of security. Many regional conflicts stem from causes that are purely indigenous in nature and will therefore erupt despite the end of super-Power rivalry. Territorial disagreements, traditional animosities and new hatreds will continue to contribute to instability in many parts of the globe. The role of the United Nations in the preservation of international peace and stability will therefore continue to be vital.

Trinidad and Tobago believes that regional organizations also must play a more important role in anticipating instability and in pre-empting conflict. They can do so by facilitating reconciliation between antagonistic States, by contributing to the establishment or preservation of democratic government, and by promoting peaceful internal change. In this regard we applaud the recent signing of the peace accord between the Government of El Salvador and the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN), as well as the equally recent rapprochement between Belize and Guatemala. We hope that, in the interests of hemispheric collaboration, relations between two other member States - Cuba and the United States of America - will also be normalized.

(Ms. Thorpe, Trinidad and Tobago)

Trinidad and Tobago has always been, and remains, firmly committed to both the ideal and the practice of democracy. We therefore strongly condemn the military coup that took place on Monday in Haiti, overthrowing the constitutionally elected Government of that country and compromising the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by Haiti's population. We deplore the ensuing loss of life and call for the prompt restoration of the constitutionally elected authority.

(Ms. Thorpe, Trinidad and Tobago)

It is regrettable that, even as the international climate improves and major agreements for the reduction of nuclear weapons are concluded, the proliferation of coventional weapons and military technology continues apace. The countries of the developing world account for 75 per cent of the purchases of arms traded each year. The Gulf War has served to remind us of the dangers of the proliferation of weapons, especially to the volatile regions of the world. There is no doubt that there is a need for stricter monitoring of the arms flows and for international agreements regulating and limiting the trade in weapons and military technology. Trinidad and Tobago therefore supports the proposal to establish, at the United Nations, a register for arms transfers.

Notwithstanding the profound reforms which have taken place in South Africa, the situation in that country continues to be a source of concern. At a time when the protection of human rights has become a central concern of the international community, South Africa remains a major transgressor in this area. Racial discrimination persists, political prisoners await release and the Draconian security laws are yet to be repealed. The fundamental right of one-man one-vote is still denied the majority of South Africans. Trinidad and Tobago has always been committed to a peaceful end to apartheid through negotiations. It has therefore been gravely concerned about escalating violence in the townships of South Africa. We trust that the recent peace accord will help bring an end to this violence, which threatens to delay progress towards the commencement of multi-party negotiations on constitutional reform.

Trinidad and Tobago remains supportive of the current peaceful process towards a free, non-racial, democratic and united South Africa. We are

(Ms. Thorpe, Trinidad and Tobago)

likewise still convinced that this process of peaceful change will be facilitated by the retention of economic and military sanctions against South Africa, until the profound and irreversible changes outlined in the 1989 United Nations Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa have been completed.

The international context in which the United Nations is operating today bears little or no resemblance to that of the 1940s, when the world body was established. The United Nations and its mechanisms were developed primarily to respond to a world dominated by super-Power rivalry and conflict. Trinidad and Tobago believes that the time has come to reappraise the mechanisms of the world body so that it can adapt to radically changed circumstances. To this end, the collective security machinery of the United Nations must be enhanced. It will also have to be given the capacity to anticipate and prevent breaches of the peace and threats to security. Most of all, the United Nations decision-making machinery must be made to reflect the common interests of all its Members and not just those of a powerful few. This is the fundamental challenge which faces our Organization today if it is to achieve a more balanced, just and equitable world order.

Mr. AL-KHALIFA (Bahrain) (interpretation from Arabic): It is a pleasure to extend to you, Sir, at the outset of my speech, the sincere congratulations of the delegation of the State of Bahrain on your election to the presidency of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. It is a source of delight and happiness to see a distinguished diplomat from our sisterly kingdom of Saudi Arabia assume this lofty post; it is evidence of the high esteem in which the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is held in the world and of the appreciation and respect you enjoy in the international community. I am

(Mr. Al-Khalifa, Bahrain)

pleased to express to you our best wishes for success in directing the proceedings of this session.

I should also like to express our sincere thanks to Mr. Guido de Marco for the competence with which he guided the proceedings of the General Assembly during his presidency last session. I also wish to avail myself of this opportunity to place on record my appreciation of the untiring efforts by Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, the Secretary-General, to strengthen the role of the Organization in the maintenance of peace and security in the world, and of the sincere attention he paid to the Gulf crisis, which enabled the world Organization to promote global solidarity and uphold international legality.

It is also my pleasure to offer congratulations to the delegations of the Republic of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania on their accession to membership of the United Nations. We are sure that their admission into our Organization will contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Charter.

For a year now, world events have been unfolding in quick succession. It is rather difficult for the observer to plumb the depths of their significance at first glance due to the fact that those events are so interlaced that they resemble the intermingled light and darkness in the early hours of the dawn of a new day. Faced with such astounding developments, the idea of a new world order has become the topic of discussion in many international assemblies and political forums, particularly after the bastions of the cold war have crumbled and their memory has begun to fade in the pages of history.

(Mr. Al-Khalifa, Bahrain)

There is no doubt that the cold war, with its various implications, left its imprint on the period from 1945 to 1990. With its end, international relations no longer follow a particular pattern: they are neither bipolar nor multipolar. It is to be hoped that the unfolding of events at this heightened tempo will make us pause, contemplate and ponder the movement of history and the paths it charts so that we may find our way to the future.

It is hardly surprising when one pauses and ponders such major changes in search of the better future which eluded previous generations, that one aspires to carry out those projects of which mankind dreams and explores the common denominators which impel nations towards cooperation, rapprochement and harmony.

It is at such critical moments in history that mankind needs a new vision with which to see the world in a true light, and from a multidimensional perspective based on the fact that international policy will yet again turn round the axis of a new pattern of relations that requires the development of a set of sophisticated plans to deal with the global issues of security, the environment, natural resources, population and other problems which will be influential factors in the twenty-first century.

We believe that the structure of the new world order should be based on the following essential foundations: security; development in all its aspects; and interaction between cultures and civilizations and exchanges between the States and peoples of the world. It is imperative that this new structure should include a competent international authority, which should oversee all the systems within the United Nations framework.

(Mr. Al-Khalifa, Bahrain)

The new system of world security must revolve around two main axes, the international and the regional. However, the most important point on which to focus at the international level during the coming phase is the development in the United Nations of a concept of collective security that would rest on two conerstones:

First, the prohibition of the use of force or the threat of the use of force in international relations for any reason whatsoever, as set out in the provisions of the Charter (Chapter I, Article II (4)).

Second, a collective response by the international community, represented by the Security Council, in cases involving threats to peace, breaches thereof or aggression, in accordance with Chapter VII of the Charter.

As we perceive it, the application of collective security requires us to meet several conditions, the most important of which are:

First, viewing peace as one indivisible whole. Given the intricacy and diversity of international relations, the outbreak of war between two States can affect the interests of other States. Under the system of collective security, all States would have a legal and moral obligation to participate in deterring aggression everywhere in the world and restoring peace.

Second, the neutrality and objectivity of the system of collective security, in the sense that measures would be taken against the aggressor State regardless of its identity or whether it was strong or weak, rich or poor.

Third, the global character of the membership of the system of collective security. All peace-loving States should participate in the system so as to ensure its universality and effectiveness.

(Mr. Al-Khalifa, Bahrain)

Fourth, the machinery of the system for enforcing collective measures should be potent and effective enough to deter any country which may contemplate aggression and to inflict appropriate punishment on aggressors.

As regards the regional axis of security, it should be borne in mind that every State, irrespective of its size or economic means, has vital security concerns that are inherent to its history and geographical location. Each State also has a legitimate right to protect its national security. Thus, we view the question of security in the Gulf region from a multidimensional perspective designed to assimilate the lessons of the past, satisfy the needs of the present and avoid the dangers of the future.

The Iraqi occupation of the sisterly state of Kuwait uncovered a serious flaw in the concept of regional security in the Gulf, which compels us to search deliberately for means of deterrence to protect ourselves against the evils of the adventurous and the covetous in order to prevent them from undermining the stability and security of this sensitive part of the world. Here, I recall the words of George Santayana, who wrote, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it". We are resolved never to relive that bitter experience, no matter what the reasons or the circumstances.

The war for the liberation of Kuwait drew a dividing line between the end of the cold war era and the start of the era of the new world order, which began with the repulsing of the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait, on the principles of collective security. This, however, does not mean that all possible threats of the use of force have been eliminated with the termination of the cold war. In this context, our recommendations for the future components of regional security in the Gulf are as follows:

(Mr. Al-Khalifa, Bahrain)

First, security arrangements capable of deterring any aggressor should be used to avert any potential threats.

Second, earnest action to achieve comprehensive economic, social and cultural development. This is an essential prerequisite of the national security of all the States of the region.

Third, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and respect for the principle of the sovereignty of every state in the Gulf region over its natural and economic resources.

Fourth, adherence to the principle of settlement of disputes by peaceful means alone.

At the same time, our conception of security in the Gulf region takes into account the geographical and political dimensions of the Middle East, since it is impossible to effectively buttress security along the shores of the Gulf without us all having a clear picture of all dimensions of security issues in the neighbouring States of the region.

In the previous session, I reiterated our conviction that the Middle East should be proclaimed a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, specifically nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. Today, we are even more resolved to achieve this goal because of our belief that international security is intrinsically linked to its regional constituents and our conviction that strengthening the security of the Middle East region by making it completely free of weapons of mass destruction will be a positive contribution to the maintenance of world peace. On the other hand, proclaiming the Middle East a zone free of weapons of mass destruction would turn the attention of its States to the question of economic, scientific and technological development and lead them to cooperate in the field of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

(Mr. Al-Khalifa, Bahrain)

The second foundation for the structure of the new world order is the fact that development and security are closely and inseparably linked. The founders of the United Nations were aware of the dialectics of the linkage between development and peace and explained the extent of that association in the provisions of the Charter. When peace is threatened, the march of peoples towards a better tomorrow is obstructed, the individual is denied his daily needs, and the gap between the poor and rich widens, leading to increased tensions between States.

Emphasis on economic considerations and their relationship to the problems of peace and security in the world should gain the attention of the international community, and States should become more aware of the concept of collective economic security. The main objective of development is to satisfy human needs and aspirations and to eliminate reasons for denying the individual his right to economic well-being.

Unfortunately, the world suffered during the past year a marked reduction in economic growth. Worse still, the United Nations, in its world economic survey of 1991, expected the rate of world economic growth for this year to be zero. In the light of such trends, both the developed and developing States should cooperate within the framework of the United Nations to overcome the negative aspects of the world economy and stimulate equitable growth in the economies of the developing countries so as to reduce tensions in the world.

One of the most important issues related to development is that of the environment, which has lately come to the forefront of international concerns. Climatic changes, pollution of the air and the sea, desertification and the depletion of the ozone layer all have negative effects on mankind's present and future.

(Mr. Al-Khalifa, Bahrain)

The war in the Gulf added new dimensions to the problem of tampering with the environment when the Iraqi forces leaked oil into the waters of the Gulf and set fire in Kuwait to some 732 oil wells that blazed for several months, and in fact many of them continue to burn despite all efforts to extinguish them.*

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* Mr. Traxler (Italy), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Al-Khalifa, Bahrain)

We hope that both the world economy and the environment will soon improve through the ongoing constructive dialogue undertaken within the framework of the United Nations system. We trust that the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, to be held in Colombia in February 1992, and the third United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, scheduled to be held in Brazil in June of that year, will lay the groundwork for international accord and cooperation to solve those problems.

The third foundation of any new world order is the necessary cultural interaction between the peoples of the world. Now that mankind has no other way of progressing and developing but to cooperate and achieve harmony between peoples, the time has come to give this issue the priority it deserves and to draw attention to its various human dimensions. Any person who knows his history must know that, over the centuries, States crumble and civilizations disappear after they had made great strides on the road to progress and advancement. Today, however, science and technology have brought together nations and peoples from various parts of the world and made isolation a non-starter in a world of interwoven interests that is closely knit by the modern means of communication and the activities of giant transnational corporations whose arms extend to every part of the globe.

Throughout history, disparity and differentiation among peoples have often led to conflict and war, making rivalry and hostility the predominant characteristics of relations between States motivated by narrow self-interest. Now that wars have become an even more heinous evil, we are duty bound to find a way to eliminate the conflict between cultures and to draw them closer together. Because wars begin in the minds of men, we should embark on establishing peace education, promoting the concept of the

(Al-Khalifa, Bahrain)

interrelationship between the cultures of the world and erasing the motives for war from people's minds.

At a time when the United Nations is seeking to create a more balanced and just world order, it is imperative that no particular culture should look down from a position of dominant strength upon the cultures of other nations. This requires a more profound dialogue between cultures in a new spirit inspired by the recognition of the co-equal cultural interrelatedness of all the peoples of the world. This pattern of relations between people is inspired by the teachings of the holy Koran, which exhorts humans to seek harmony and affinity among themselves, as in the words of the Almighty:

> O mankind! We created
> You from a single (pair)
> Of a male and a female,
> And made you into
> Nations and tribes, that
> Ye may know each other
> Not that ye may despise
> (Each other). Verily
> The most honoured of you
> In the sight of God
> Is he who is the most
> Righteous of you.
> (Sura XLIX, verse 13)

The events which have taken place in the international arena since the General Assembly's last session embody numerous indicators that point at a tendency to peaceful solutions to many international and regional issues and problems. Of particular interest is the matter of the Kuwaiti prisoners of war detained in Iraq, because it bespeaks defiance to Security Council resolutions and international conventions. We appeal to the international community to move towards a speedy solution to this humanitarian problem, freeing those prisoners forthwith and repatriating them safely to their homeland.

(Al-Khalifa, Bahrain)

In the forefront of other international issues is the question of the Palestinian people and the various kinds of repression it continues to suffer at the hands of the Israeli occupation authorities. At the heart of the peace process in the Middle East is the exercise by the Palestinian people of its right to self-determination. We therefore call upon the Security Council to impose international legality, elaborate the bases for peace between all parties concerned in the Arab-Israeli conflict, and take a firm and serious international stand that may force Israel to accept a comprehensive and just solution to the question of Palestine, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, and to recognize the right of the Palestinian people to establish its own independent State on its national soil. It should be emphasized that the Israeli occupation forces must withdraw from all occupied Arab territories, including Al-Quds, southern Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Golan.

We hope that the current United States initiative and other efforts exerted in the international arena will contribute to creating an atmosphere conducive to holding the peace conference and reaching a just and lasting solution to the Middle East issue.

As regards Lebanon, we call upon the international community to support the decisions and actions taken by that country's Government to firmly establish the rule of its legitimate authority. We also appeal to the Security Council to take action on implementing its resolution 425 (1978) by ensuring the withdrawal of the Israeli forces and the restoration of the authority of the Lebanese State and its sovereignty over southern Lebanon.

With regard to the situation in South Africa, this year has witnessed positive steps towards repealing the policies of apartheid. We trust that this will be followed by the complete elimination of all manifestations of

(Al-Khalifa, Bahrain)

social discrimination and the restoration of the political and constitutional rights of the black majority in South Africa.

Concerning the Cyprus question, we hope that progress in the talks between the two Cypriot communities, under the auspices of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, will be achieved so that Cyprus can regain its unity.

We look forward to seeing the countries of the world cooperating with each other through the United Nations. May their cooperation in peaceful areas expand and surmount all obstacles and barriers so that international solidarity may be strengthened and harmony among the peoples of the world may prevail. Obstacles of all sorts have not been able to halt the spread of knowledge to all parts of the world, and history teaches us that learning and knowledge cannot be isolated or made the exclusive realm of one particular region or State. The technological revolution has enabled man to overcome those barriers, and technological innovations have had a far-reaching influence on bringing peoples together and making every people feel itself an integral part of one big interrelated society and that its interests are affected by what happens to other peoples.

On the level of international relations, the United Nations is truly the most important expression of this age and one of its salient features. As the world Organization follows the path charted for it, the bonds of interrelation between States grow stronger and people's perception of the fusion of their interests increases.

The survival of the United Nations as an edifice of world peace and its continued fulfillment of its mission are no longer subject to the will of one State or group of States. They now flow from the noble message the United Nations upholds and the great missions assigned to it, which are expanding

(Al-Khalifa, Bahrain)

daily to include various fields, such as the means to bring States closer together, the maintenance of peace, and the well-being of the peoples of the world.

Mr. LEVY (Israel) (interpretation from French): Let me begin by congratulating Ambassador Shihabi on his election to the office of President of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, which I hope will be crowned with success. I also take this opportunity to congratulate the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, on his endeavours and his valuable contribution to the promotion of world peace and understanding among nations.

In this era of heightened expectations of freedom and of peace among nations, the threat of despotism has not yet disappeared from the world. This Assembly convenes in the aftermath of two crises that threatened human freedoms and that aroused profound concern throughout the enlightened international community. Future historians will undoubtedly cast more light on these two grim chapters in the closing years of this century from an appropriate perspective. But we, representatives of Governments, do not have the time to indulge in the luxury of observing events passively, as historians can do.

We are making history, not writing it; making history here and now. It is incumbent upon us as representatives of responsible Governments to mould current events in a spirit of respect for the values our democratic regimes represent, and aspiring to a world order based on universal freedoms.

We must draw the correct conclusions and apply the lessons of the crises of the past year and bequeath to all mankind a code of conduct, thus ensuring that our world will no longer be exposed to insane outbursts of tyranny. Our lesson from the two recent crises is that there is an unequivocal link between the nature of political regimes and the peace and stability of the world.

(Mr. Levy, Israel)

Democratic government is based on the recognition of civil liberties and on respect for the sovereignty of other nations. Democracy is the natural condition of a healthy society. It would be the preferred system for all mankind, were it free to choose. Man was born to freedom; it is part of his intrinsic nature. He was born to live, not to fight wars; to create, not to destroy. The spirit of freedom is embedded in the human intellect and the law of the jungle is alien to it. Therein lies the superiority of man over creatures that are devoid of the power of choice. "Live and let live" is the voice of human reason. "When one saves a human life it is as if one has saved all of humanity," runs an ancient Jewish saying.

These basic truisms have thrust themselves to the fore during recent years, when a new dawn has broken in the Soviet Union and in the countries of Eastern Europe. Seventy years of an oppressive regime could not suppress man's spirit of freedom. That spirit has arisen anew and broken its chains after three generations of independence denied. Now that the wind of freedom has been liberated no power on Earth can ever return it to captivity.

We saw this with our own eyes in the 70 hours of the abortive coup in the Soviet Union. We could have anticipated the end of that coup from the moment a small group of citizens first appeared in the streets of Moscow to face the approaching tanks. They stood against them unarmed, like a human banner, and the soldiers did not shoot. The army held its fire, faced as it was with the spirit of freedom that had taken root even among its own ranks. When the muse of freedom sang, the guns fell silent.

That is the lesson the world has drawn from the crisis of August 1991. Yet it learned another bitter and rapid lesson from the Persian Gulf crisis of August 1990. It learned how shortsighted it had been in supplying, over the

(Mr. Levy, Israel)

years and without any controls, vast quantities of weapons to a dictatorial regime. It has learned just how terrifying can be the combination of military power and a lack of inhibition regarding its use. The chameleon that had bemused the entire enlightened world turned into a lethal python that wound itself around mankind's neck.

The billows of black smoke that rose from hundreds of oil wells across the Kuwaiti desert are a living and tangible illustration of the evil genie that had escaped from its bottle, throwing a huge pall over entire continents. Tyranny - and the tyrant - displayed an undreamed-of vitality.

Saddam Hussein has not been removed from the world scene. His defeated people have not rejected him. The Kurdish revolt has been brutally suppressed, leaving in its wake hundreds of thousands of homeless refugees. The scale of military strength that Saddam Hussein has retained is now revealed as a renewed and genuine threat to the region.

The Iraqi tyrant continues to scheme against and deceive the rest of the world. The United Nations inspection commissions have, one after the other, uncovered his lies and discovered the hidden stocks of non-conventional weapons he sought to conceal. Saddam Hussein is attempting to keep the world in ignorance of his revived military power, but the world, under the determined leadership of the United States, is not turning a blind eye to the facts, and will not permit the tyranny of Saddam Hussein to survive.

Last September, from this rostrum, I warned that Israel was about to become the target of attacks by Saddam Hussein in a war in which it was not involved, and to which it was not a party. And indeed Israel came under missile attack. It clenched its fists and gritted its teeth in refraining from any counter-attack, so as not to upset the international coalition.

(Mr. Levy, Israel)

The international community has come to understand Israel's position as the bastion of genuine democracy in a dangerous and violent region. The events of the past year have made enlightened States world-wide re-evaluate the character of the Israeli-Arab conflict in the light of this correct political and historical perspective.

(Mr. Levy, Israel)

Many countries realize today that the root causes of this bitter conflict, which has lasted decades, lie in the refusal of the Arab States - excluding Egypt - to recognize the existence of Israel and to accept its independence and sovereignty. It is this intransigence that has been the source of the wars imposed on Israel.

It has been clearly established that Israel is the only country in the world under a permanent tangible, physical threat to its very existence - a threat that has brought upon it six wars in the four decades of its existence. States that were themselves involved in the Gulf crisis have now come to understand, perhaps for the first time, the logic of Israel's insistence on a peace ensuring its security and the well-being of its inhabitants.

In January 1991 we presented a consolidated formula of five principles designed to promote the peace process: first, an end to the state of war between the Arab States and Israel, with a view to the signing of a peace treaty; secondly, reduction and control of the arms race; thirdly, direct negotiations, without preconditions, between Israel and its neighbours, with a view to the signing of peace agreements between Israel and each of the Arab States; fourthly, the simultaneous start of a resolution of the Palestinian problem, to be carried out in stages by us and the residents of Judea, Samaria and Gaza, in a joint framework with Jordan; and, fifthly, the drafting of joint programmes for regional development, with international aid, in areas such as water, the environment, electricity, solar energy, agriculture, health, transportation and the infrastructure. These principles have strengthened the foundations of the peace process in which we have been engaged since the cease-fire in the Gulf.

(Mr. Levy, Israel)

Since its establishment Israel has tirelessly sought to talk peace with its neighbours. In the aftermath of each of the wars that was forced upon us Israel has appealed to the Arab States to conduct direct talks with it, with no prior conditions, to attain a true and lasting peace. It seems that this appeal will now at last be answered. In a few weeks we shall, I hope, meet in face-to-face discussions with our neighbours in order to lay the foundations of a better future for our peoples and our coming generations. Israel is convinced that the sufferings of our war-torn region will be brought to an end, not as a result of any balance of terror, but of the benefits that peace will bring.

The bitter arms race in the Gulf and the Middle East has brought many tragedies to the peoples of the region. It is responsible for the poverty and misery of millions of human beings and for the wars which have broken out in our region over and over again in the latter half of this century. The arms race has drained the resources of the different States to the detriment of the welfare of their citizens. The potential means of destruction amassed by cruel dictators with limitless ambitions is a proven recipe for the outbreak of wars.

Our region has also known the use of chemical weapons, which Saddam Hussein used against his own people as well as against his Iranian enemy. The elimination of chemical weapons everywhere, and especially in the Middle East, is of supreme importance. This is why Israel has agreed to become a party to the convention to eliminate chemical weapons, while maintaining the principle of universality. For the convention to be effective all States of the region must become party to it.

(Mr. Levy, Israel)

The term "weapons of mass destruction" is no mere technical phrase. Every type of weapon - including conventional - that entails a threat of the indiscriminate destruction of large numbers of people falls, in our view, into the category of "weapons of mass destruction". Arms control must therefore include conventional weaponry as well.

On the eve of the convening of a regional peace conference, I appeal from this rostrum to the leaders of the Arab States. I say "Stop the insane arms race in weapons of extermination. Abandon all destructive impulses. Put an end to blind hatred. Do not waste your resources. Do not give up the opportunity for progress and well-being for your own countries for the illusory dream of destroying Israel.

"Israel draws its strength from its historic and moral right to a safe existence in its own country. Set out with us on the path of peace. Think of your children, as we think of ours. For they were born not for war, to be killed, but to live."

The far-reaching changes that have occurred in the struggle between blocs in the world have also been accompanied by positive changes in Africa. Some internal wars have ended, and others we hope are about to end. The process of African States' attaining their independence has been completed. The apartheid regime in South Africa is nearing its end. A wind of democracy has blown through many African States, inspiring a progressive evolution.

But in many States of the third world, especially in Africa, hunger, disease and misery are still on the rise. The growing birth rate has led to a population explosion and has aggravated the shortage of essential foodstuffs. In extensive areas the desert has reclaimed arable land and pasture land. Hundreds of thousands of people are falling victim to starvation and epidemics.

(Mr. Levy, Israel)

All this is happening at the end of the twentieth century, a century that has seen unprecedented scientific, technological and medical achievements. In an era in which borderlines between East and West are becoming blurred, the developed countries must seek to bridge the huge gaps between the living standards of the northern and southern hemispheres. We must lend an attentive ear, especially to the heart-rending appeals for help from the African continent.

Israel is a small country, poor in natural resources and material riches, but it has its faith. It faces the tremendous challenge of absorbing every year hundreds of thousands of new immigrants, who flock to it from many countries.

(Mr. Levy, Israel)

However, in the process of building a new society and developing its economy, Israel has, over the past 40 years, accumulated considerable knowledge and experience in agriculture, technology, medicine and science, as well as in organization and management. Israel has for many years placed its knowledge at the disposal of developing countries. The result of this mission which we have taken upon ourselves has been decades of cooperation and assistance to 96 countries.

In Israel, for several generations we have witnessed a revival in the life of a nation which has brought to the world values of peace, liberty and justice. These principles are the essence of the law of the Jewish people and of its universal message.

The Jewish people is the only people ever to have been exiled again and again, with its faith in its return to its homeland remaining unshaken. Each time, mankind has benefited from the spiritual assets and values of justice which have accompanied the revival of the Jewish people in its ancestral land. The return to Zion in our own times, which has been the objective of the Zionist movement, has resulted in a gathering in Israel of the Jewish people from all over the world. Wherever tyranny has raged and our people have been persecuted, assistance came from Israel, bringing them back to their national homeland in freedom and security. In the aftermath of the Second World War, Israel took in hundreds of thousands of our brethren who had survived in Europe as well as hundreds of thousands from Arab countries and elsewhere, escaping discrimination and persecution.

These very days we are witnessing a phenomenon stirring in its enormity - that of the return of Jews from the Soviet Union and from Ethiopia to their ancestral homeland. The Zionist movement is colour-blind. The distinction

(Mr. Levy, Israel)

between colours is alien to Zionism. That is why it has been proven that Zionism is tolerant and liberal par excellence.

Last week, President Bush appealed to this Assembly to abrogate the cynical and deplorable resolution which equates Zionism with racism. The President aptly described the unique character of the Zionist movement and its spiritual and humanitarian values. More and more representatives of nations are joining his appeal, guided by this great historical truth. This appeal will continue to reverberate both within this Hall and outside it until the repeal, in the near future, of that resolution, which constitutes a calumny on this Organization and a disgrace to it.

This session stands on the threshold of a new hope. People the world over aspire for an end to hardship and suffering and for the beginning, at last, of an era full of promise and hope. For us, the Jewish people, it is also the beginning of a new year, when we exchange the traditional blessing:

"May the outgoing year sweep away its maledictions, and may the new year bring with it blessings for all mankind."

Mr. RAHMAN (Bangladesh): I stand before this Assembly with a sense of pride and humility - pride, because I represent a Government freely elected and armed with the mandate of a people revitalized and dignified by the overthrow of an entrenched autocratic regime; humility, because I represent a country comparatively new on the world stage and still beset by the problems of underdevelopment.

What message can I convey to this world body that is relevant to our rapidly changing times and can meaningfully contribute to its goals of peace, justice and development?

(Mr. Rahman, Bangladesh)

I am emboldened by the consideration that the vast segment of the world's population and a majority of nation-States fall in the same category as Bangladesh. The new world order we all aim at cannot be realized without addressing our problems and reflecting our hopes and aspirations in the global decision-making process.

Before proceeding further, I should like to say how happy I am to see Ambassador Samir Shihabi presiding over the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, not only because of his known skill and abilities but also because he belongs to a country with which we have the most cordial and fraternal relations. As always, we are indebted to our Secretary-General for his vision and tireless endeavours over a full decade in the cause of peace. We pay him our warmest tributes.

I should like also to welcome warmly the seven new nations which have been admitted to membership of our Organization. We look forward to working in close cooperation with representatives of both Koreas, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

To our mind, the heart of the great experiment we call the United Nations is about or should be about people. Their yearning for peace, respect and dignity, tolerance and good-neighbourliness, social progress and a better quality of life in larger freedom are the critical ingredients that the founding fathers have incorporated into the Preamble of the United Nations Charter. They form the essence of partnership, of human solidarity and interdependence that gives meaning to the expression of the very first words of the Charter, "We the peoples of the United Nations".

(Mr. Rahman, Bangladesh)

Unfortunately, this fact and these elements were obscured as the world turned to grapple with the more immediate compulsions of great-Power rivalry: regional conflicts, the division of ideology and the self-destructive arms race they fuelled. The ruling élites in the different countries have taken cover under the doctrines of State sovereignty and domestic jurisdiction to circumscribe the access of individuals to world forums. The perceptions, priorities and aspirations of peoples are more often than not clouded or forgotten.

The danger this poses is now all too apparent. Nationalistic, ethnic, communal and cultural rivalries have resurfaced virulently. They have generated powerful centrifugal and other forces that threaten established boundaries and have unleashed bigotry, extremism and violence in many countries and regions. Unprecedented numbers of terrified and vulnerable people in Europe, Asia and Africa have fled across national boundaries driven by oppression, discrimination and civil war. Economic and social deprivation has been a prime mover of discord leading to alienation between and within nations. Poverty and indiscriminate waste have damaged ecosystems world-wide. Drugs and terrorism have invaded all societies. Worst of all are the huge resources that continue to be diverted to means of destruction.

These realities are balanced by positive impulses that underscore the real potential of people for the good of the world. It is a time of rare opportunity to ensure that the benefits of human solidarity and cooperation outweigh the negative factors. There is now greater appreciation of our true interdependence. This is not based on any ideal vision of world government but on the practical realization that science and technology have closed the

(Mr. Rahman, Bangladesh)

information and communication gap; that the economic forces and markets, especially the mobility of capital business and labour, have bound us irrevocably together.

There is a real chance today that common and collective security can be achieved by promoting the unfulfilled promises of the Charter; that nuclear and conventional disarmament can be advanced in all regions with resulting peace dividends; that the military culture and psychosis of comparative insecurity can be contained through reliance on economic strength and social cohesion.

Yet all these advances will remain aspirations unless we start at the beginning - the human condition. There is resurgent awareness that no social or political dispensation can or should endure that does not respect the dignity and worth of the human person, the equal rights of men and women, and nations, large and small. Human rights is no longer a subsidiary theme. It has assumed a dominant position in world affairs. It is no longer trite to say that the rope of our global society is as strong as its weakest strand. The real strength of society, and one that has enlightened human civilization, is the indomitable spirit of the human being.

In Bangladesh we have learned one paramount lesson: there is no short-cut to achieving progress, no matter how reliable or generous our friends may be. Whether it relates to achieving freedom from political oppression, vindicating human rights or seeking social and economic emancipation, a country must ultimately depend on itself. There is no substitute for action by peoples themselves. The fabric of self-reliance is thus intimately woven by three critical strands: democracy, development and human beings.

(Mr. Rahman, Bangladesh)

The choice of democracy for us was not based on the goodness of the system, which may be debatable, but on the evil of dictatorship which was certain. The previous regime, which seized power illegally, was predoomed to isolation and ultimate failure. Without legitimacy its policies became atrophied. Efforts to short-circuit the mandate of the people through bribery or artificial devices proved infructuous. Economic and social activities were distorted to reflect the whims of the ruling élite and the preservation of its powers and privileges were exposed. Corruption permeated all levels. Overall deprivation was camouflaged by projects of high visibility. The inevitable result was alienation between the Government and people and marginalization of different segments of society. The absolute poor were distanced beyond the reach of any development.

Bangladesh's experience has been replicated in country after country. The myth that only an authoritarian government can ensure efficiency and take bold and decisive steps has been exploded. It is now plain that without mass participation in decision-making, without transparency, accountability and responsibility, for which democracy stands, economic growth and the core values and priorities of society cannot be effectively realized. The road to democracy for us was a difficult and painstaking process. Yet we have been fortified in this transition by tangible achievements. Uncompromising resistance, mass upsurge and a momentous agreement to restore democracy by all the major opposition parties enabled us to replace an entrenched dictatorship with a neutral care-taker government charged with the sole task of holding democratic elections.

The election that was held within the constitutional limit of 90 days was universally acknowledged as an exemplary model of peaceful democratic

(Mr. Rahman, Bangladesh)

expression - this despite deep scepticism that a free, fair and peaceful election could be held at all given severe constraints of time, the formulation of acceptable procedures encompassing a vast electorate of 30 million voters and a past history replete with examples of violence, fraud and vote rigging.

Many believed that the new Government would also seek to accrue power. Yet through consensus, forged among all parties, a historic transfer was effected from the presidential to the parliamentary system of government to curb any such tendency.

A nation-wide referendum has now endorsed this change. Meanwhile, the Parliament is following through the task of ensuring checks and balances, weeding out bad laws, buttressing the rule of law and unshackling press controls.

This prelude to establishing democracy is all the more remarkable in the face of the coalescing crisis faced by the nation. Many believed that the new Government would not be able to handle or even survive the combined impact of the repercussions brought about by the aftermath of the Gulf war and the devastating cyclone disaster of April 1991.

(Mr. Rahman, Bangladesh)

Yet, this too was overcome with drive and determination, spontaneous humanitarian assistance from abroad and the courage and resilience of our people.

Indeed, the 200 days that the Government has been in power have vindicated our faith in our ability to build upon democracy. It has reinforced our belief that solutions to the problems of democracy call for more democracy. That is true because our people have demonstrated that there are extraordinary possibilities in ordinary people. They remain our real strength tempered and tested by recurrent trial.

Our own experience has underlined certain basic truths. Without democracy a people's potential for socio-economic progress cannot flower. Equally, without improved standards of living and a vision of the future that can sustain hope, democracy will wither. Human rights become meaningless in the face of constraints of poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy. No other right can take precedence over the amelioration of this condition.

For Bangladesh, the fight against poverty and steps to unlock growth remain the foremost challenge to shore up democracy. In this task we cannot follow any role model or set prescription. We must beat our own track.

The task ahead of us is profound. Poverty, rapid population growth and environmental degradation torment our people and our development prospects. They are superimposed on an economy with a narrow resource base, low productivity and savings, further compounded by lack of capital, technology and skilled manpower. Half the population is trapped below the poverty line and 80 per cent operate in an informal sector with very low levels of monetization. Annual per capita income growth has remained at a static 0.5 per cent over 20 years. These statistics alone highlight the plight of the absolute poor, long by-passed by development.

(Mr. Rahman, Bangladesh)

Happily for us, the poor have proved they are an efficient group who provide us with an opportunity to tap their productivity and creative energies. One proof is that, despite these constraints, the spirit of freedom has not withered but instead burst into flame.

Democracy has influenced certain key perceptions that have influenced my Government's search for remedial action on the problems of development. We have taken concerted steps to provide a supportive policy environment that allows us to move gradually towards a free market economy. There is a vital recognition that to succeed, governments must spur productivity by intervening less, allow competition to govern prices and to concentrate on quality rather than quantity of investment.

Our core strategy revolves around human resources development, a concept that combines peoples' participation, poverty alleviation, environmental supportive growth and advancement of human rights and welfare. Its fundamental goal is to bring the deprived and disadvantaged from the periphery to the centre of development.

In pursuit of this strategy, we have identified a number of areas for priority action. These include agriculture and small enterprises which generate the largest number of jobs and promote distributive justice; productive use of labour - our most abundant resource; targeting imaginative programmes to reach the poorest, and extend to them the basic social services, and building a physical infrastructure, especially communications. Most important of all is the need to invest in people - particularly to strengthen the rights and role of women.

Our experience in microcosm bears certain lessons of validity for the larger community of nations. Perhaps the most important is that standards,

(Mr. Rahman, Bangladesh)

however ideal, cannot always be imposed from above but must evolve indigenously from within each country and its people. Certainly double standards can erode the whole edifice of trust since we should not preach what we ourselves do not follow.

As we turn to the great goals of this Organization, this perception assumes some credibility. Peace with justice demands that each country and its people determine their own destiny without outside interference; that they be free to choose their own governments and follow their own political, social and economic systems. This has been dramatically brought home as Afghanistan and Cambodia move towards resolution of their problems. It is equally true that the right of self-determination of peoples under colonial rule or foreign occupation is an inherent right that cannot long be denied.

One look around this Assembly Hall bears out this fact, especially as we focus on Namibia and the newest incumbents of membership in our Organization. One major void remains: that of Palestine.

The Gulf war unambiguously demonstrated the unique convergence of action among the world community to reject attempts to usurp or compromise the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of a Member State. It also increased awareness of the danger of using differing standards by allowing Israel to continue its illegal occupation of Arab territories in the Middle East.

Hopes for disarmament have been raised by spectacular cut-backs in nuclear weapons, by the accession of France and China to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), by the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and by the means being used to establish a durable security regime in Europe. The unilateral initiative taken by President Bush for further

(Mr. Rahman, Bangladesh)

reduction in nuclear weapons is another vital milestone. Yet the over-kill factor is more than prevalent in both nuclear and convential weapons and massive resources continue to be diverted to unproductive means of destruction.

While recognition grows that human rights must extend beyond the domestic plane, a universal culture embracing all the basic freedoms, including freedom from fear and want, freedom of expression and of participation and freedom from discrimination of all kinds on a global basis - such as a human rights culture - still has to evolve uniformly.

In South Africa, despite momentous changes, the struggle continues to dismantle the edifice of apartheid and to pursue negotiations that will result in a new constitution based on the freely expressed will of the people, the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In the Middle East, Israel continues unabated its policies to change the economic, social, cultural and demographic situation of the occupied Arab territories, to encourage Jewish immigrants, to expand settlements and pursue a brutal policy of repression against the Palestinian intifadah. These are glaring examples of the infringement of human rights that must be redressed.

(Mr. Rahman, Bangladesh)

However, perhaps the most vital aspect of human rights that has yet to find universal acceptance is recognition that the right to development is the most fundamental right of all. Surely, peace and security cannot be achieved unless conditions are created to remove the root cause of war and conflicts - economic and social deprivation. Certainly, this requires us to eradicate poverty, tackle indebtedness, reverse environmental degradation, fight drug abuse and improve social justice and the quality of life of all peoples on Earth.

I have already underscored the fact that development is the primary responsibility of each country itself. Yet, this approach can succeed only if it is supplemented by a conducive external environment. There is now widespread awareness of the stagnancy in the development cause and of the recourse to short-term crisis management that has been a sad legacy of the decade of the 1980s. We are encouraged by efforts to reverse this trend, revitalize growth and reduce poverty. There has been a growing convergence of strategies to redress the critical issues of decreased investment, reduction and restructuring of debt, trade promotion and technology transfer. Preferential treatment for the least developed countries must remain a continuing commitment in this regard.

The debate as to who is to blame for damage to the ecosystem and for environmental degradation has acquired some intensity. One fact, however, is indisputable: all countries - developed or developing - have a shared interest in finding remedial solutions. The question of burden-sharing must take into account the limited resources available to developing countries. For many of them, the impact of natural disasters linked to environmental degradation is fast becoming a question of survival. The question whether

(Mr. Rahman, Bangladesh)

they have already crossed the threshold where depletion of the natural endowment has diminished their capacity to meet future needs is an issue of burning importance. It has underscored the need for a long-term perspective to determine the costs of such depletion. It has also dramatically underlined the fact that improved economic conditions are a sine qua non for improving the environment.

The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development looms large as a major event for finding cooperative solutions. Key elements will be practical means and costs of redressing specific environmental concerns; an energy dialogue for more efficient energy use; workable monitoring systems; definition of clear norms and sanctions governing environmental behaviour; and the adoption of conventions on climate and the preservation of biological diversity.

Another crucial element needs to be stressed. The development objective must be put in sharper focus than the theme of adjustment, which has long overshadowed it. Structural adjustment measures, though necessary, must be seen in the perspective of their inherent limitations. Not least of these are heavy costs, uncertainties, the long lead time involved and their social and humanitarian impact. The hardships necessarily involved often lead the poorest sectors of society to bear a disproportionate burden.

If this world Organization is to succeed and flourish, it will depend as much on the resilience of its Member States and their ability to prosper individually as on their ability to contribute constructively to its great goals and purposes. Positive efforts made by each country cumulatively strengthen the overall mandate of the United Nations. Bangladesh in its own small way has sought to make our contribution a priority commitment of our

(Mr. Rahman, Bangladesh)

foreign policy. Among the major directions we are pursuing, I would like briefly to underline the following.

First, the quest for a new world order must begin with putting our own house in order. We have thus actively sought to maintain the momentum and credibility of the South-Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and, by promoting its socio-economic mandate, to create a broad-based climate of confidence-building, to reduce tension in the region and to resolve outstanding differences through dialogue and negotiation.

Secondly, in the world arena we support all measures designed to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations to prevent war and resolve conflicts and to extend this capacity in new ways so as to preserve the security of small States and institute a system of global watch to anticipate, contain and prevent tension points.

We have purposefully contributed to the Organization's peace-keeping efforts through the dispatch of military and civilian contingents to police cease-fire lines in the Gulf, help reconstruction efforts in Kuwait and monitor elections in Namibia. We stand ready to assist the United Nations peace process in Western Sahara and Cambodia. Moreover, we fully support strengthening the financial and institutional base of peace-keeping and its growth in imaginative directions, including the concept of preventive diplomacy, particularly in containing the impact not only of man-made, but also of natural, disasters.

We have striven through concrete initiatives to participate constructively and with moderation and pragmatism in all socio-economic forums, especially for the purpose of projecting the concerns of the least developed countries. Since the only real protection of small States is the

(Mr. Rahman, Bangladesh)

rule of law, we have closely followed and actively contributed to the progressive development and codification of international law in such diverse fields as scarce resources, law of the sea, environmental protection, refugees and migrants. Through national legislation, its regional extension and international participation, we have also helped to seek solutions to the global problems of drugs, terrorism and environmental protection. Clearly, our role in and contribution to strengthening multilateralism and the central role of the United Nations in the cooperative management of the world's problems remain an abiding commitment of my country.

In conclusion, let me say that we have reached a critical point in the world's struggle for stability and well-being. We are face to face with opportunities rare in history. Technological advances in all fields have strengthened the concept of an interdependent world. There is a new mass consciousness of rights that have led to dramatic breakthroughs in democracy, human rights and recognition of the contribution and participation of the people in decision-making. A climate of cooperation, mutual understanding and universal fraternity has been emerging despite many adverse legacies inherited from the past.

The United Nations has reasserted its importance and has tangibly demonstrated its potential for collective action. We must now go with this tide and carry forward the momentum peacefully to resolve regional disputes, promote disarmament, contain adverse global forces and strengthen the rule of law. The pre-eminent challenge remains to upgrade the quality of life of all peoples everywhere as the most potent means of demonstrating our common humanity. There is no doubt that the United Nations remains the only forum where we can meet the challenges of the future by drawing upon our combined solidarity and willingness to confront them together.

ADDRESS BY MR. YON HYONG MUK, PREMIER OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL OF THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Premier of the Administrative Council of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Yon Hyong Muk, Premier of the Administrative Council of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Premier of the Administrative Council of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mr. Yon Hyong Muk, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. YON (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) (spoke in Korean; English text furnished by the delegation): It is a great pleasure for me to take this opportunity, now that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has become a Member of the United Nations, to explain the internal and external policies of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its position on international affairs.

First of all, may I extend my congratulations to Mr. Samir S. Shihabi on his election to the presidency of the current session and express my expectation that the General Assembly will achieve good results under his chairmanship.

I should also like to express my gratitude to the Governments and representatives present here for the unanimous adoption of the resolution on the admission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to membership of the United Nations. I should like to affirm that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will discharge in good faith its duty as a Member State of the United Nations in conformity with the purposes and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

(Mr. Yon, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

It is an irreversible trend of the present time for all countries and nations to advance towards sovereignty, independence and peace, free from domination and subjugation. Therefore it is the task of all mankind to give a powerful impetus to this historic trend and build a free, peaceful new world. The United Nations serves as an important political forum for the carrying out of these current tasks, and thus the expectations of the world's people in regard to its role are growing daily.

It is regarded as necessary now to destroy the inequitable old international order, establish an equitable new one and effect the democratization of international society so as to build the peaceful new world to which mankind aspires. A new international order should be established on the basis of the independent and equal rights of all countries and nations in the world, regardless of the size of their territories or their level of development. There can be large and small countries, developed and less developed nations in the world, but there must not be senior and junior countries, dominating nations and those destined to be dominated.

Although my country is a small one, we strongly advocate greater independence and dignity. As an equal member of the international community, we will make active efforts to establish an equitable new international order which does not allow any privileges and arbitrariness in international relations. Today one cannot think about building a genuine new international order unless the gap between rich and poor, between the developed and the developing countries, which is growing wider with each passing day, is reduced.

We believe that the non-aligned countries, the developing countries, should consolidate and develop the Non-Aligned Movement into a force with more

(Mr. Yon, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

vitality, with a view to building a new international order, contributing to the cause of world peace and exercising the rights it has been granted. When the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement concert their efforts and promote friendship and cooperation in realizing the principles and ideals of the Movement, the rehabilitation of countries and nations can be enhanced. The matter of relations with the developed countries can then be solved smoothly by promoting South-South cooperation.

(Mr. Yon, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

Furthermore, world peace can be firmly guaranteed only when a new international order is established and the gap between rich and poor, between North and South, is eliminated. Peace is the common desire of mankind. Today, the threat to peace comes from attempts to violate the independence of other countries and nations and to dominate others. To safeguard peace, every country and nation should maintain its independence, oppose power politics and engage in powerful, joint international action to prevent war.

The most pressing issue involved in ensuring a durable peace in the world is to effect arms reduction and abolish nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. As a nation exposed to continual nuclear threat, the Korean people have put forward the abolition of nuclear weapons as an urgent demand related to our national destiny. The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea regards the achievement of a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing within a short period of time as one of the most pressing tasks in the field of disarmament today. It will actively join the international community in its endeavours to prevent the testing and production of nuclear weapons, to reduce nuclear weapons and, eventually, to abolish all nuclear weapons.

The completion and conclusion of the global convention on chemical weapons is an important step in eliminating weapons of mass destruction. In keeping with our goal of comprehensive disarmament we support the idea of a ban on chemical weapons and will exert our efforts to make this convention an equitable, comprehensive and complete international legislative instrument.

The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea holds that, if the world is to become peaceful and stable, both disputes between countries and nations and regional disputes and disturbances should first be settled.

(Mr. Yon, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

In the settling of all disputes account should be taken of the interests of the parties concerned and the cause of peace. Recently the United Nations has exerted considerable effort in coordinating disputes and has achieved some progress. We express our support for all endeavours to settle regional disputes through dialogue and negotiation and through political coordination. It is our position that all acts of infringement on the sovereignty of other countries, all interference in the internal affairs of other countries and the establishment of unfair blockades and pressures should be ended immediately, and we support the just struggles of all peoples opposing such interventionist policies.

Today, when the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has formally entered the United Nations, my country's Government expects that the remnants of the past relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United Nations prior to the country's admission to membership of the Organization will be completely eradicated and that the United Nations will make a due contribution to the fair solution of the question of Korea's reunification.

Originally, Korea was a homogeneous nation that existed for thousands of years in one land with the same language and sharing the same blood. The division of Korea was not brought about by contradictions within our nation; rather it was imposed upon us by foreign forces.

Today, the question of Korean reunification has become not only a vital question related to the destiny of our nation, but also a pressing problem, the solution to which is directly linked with the peace of Asia and the rest of the world.

(Mr. Yon, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

Over the prolonged period of division in Korea, different systems have been established in the north and in the south. In the northern part of Korea, a man-centred socialist system, the embodiment of the Juche idea, has firmly taken root. Our socialism is neither imported from, nor a replica of, that in any foreign country. It is a unique socialism, which our people have chosen by themselves in keeping with the realities of our country, one which continues to grow stronger and to develop through the efforts of our people themselves.

In our country, the leader, the party and the popular masses are united and of one mind, and the entire people are iron strong in their faith and determination to defend our socialism. Therefore, our socialism will not be swayed, no matter in what direction the wind blows, and it will continue to stay firmly on its course.

There may be some temporary frustrations and twists and turns in the course of history's advance, but it is an inviolable law that mankind heads for the road to independence. The question is how firmly to rely on the popular masses, how highly to respect their will and how to represent their interests. It is our firm position that the question of the country's reunification must be resolved in conformity with the will and interests of our people.

It is from that standpoint that we consistently call for reunification by bringing down the barriers of division and attaining the greater unity of the nation. We cannot understand why there has been silence about the concrete wall built in the southern area of the Military Demarcation Line as the symbol of Korea's division and confrontation, while at the same time there has been

(Mr. Yon, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

acclaim for the demolition of the Berlin Wall and the crumbling of the barrier of the East-West cold war.

We have already proposed the demolition of the concrete wall in the southern area of the Military Demarcation Line and free travel and a full opening up in all areas of politics, economy and culture. This is a powerful way to achieve national reconciliation and unity and to realize the country's reunification.

In the south of Korea there persists another system quite different from ours. We believe that, to resolve the question of reunification, the reality in our country should be the starting-point from which we must find a way that meets the specific conditions that exist in our country. If the stark realities existing in north and south are disregarded and reunification through unification of the systems is advocated, it will inevitably increase mistrust and confrontation, not reunification, and will lead, furthermore, to the recurrence of the national scourge of conflict and fratricidal war.

(Mr. Yon, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

Therefore we hold that Korea's reunification should be based on reunification of the nation - that is, uniting the North and the South as one nation - and not on unification of the systems through one side conquering or being conquered by the other. As the most realistic means of achieving this solution, our Government has proposed accomplishing reunification through a confederation based on one nation and one State, but two systems and two Governments. As a concrete means of achieving confederal reunification, we have proposed the establishment of a Democratic Confederal Republic of Koryo.

Furthermore, for the purpose of facilitating nationwide agreement, we have expressed our willingness to hold negotiations on our proposal that, in the interim, the regional autonomous Governments of the confederal Republic be vested with more powers and, in due course, the functioning of the central Government upgraded so that full reunification, in the form of a confederation, may be achieved eventually.

We believe that confederal reunification is the most realistic and peace-loving way, as it rules out both the prevalence of Communism and communization, on the one hand, and a northward or a southward invasion, on the other. This proposal accords with the noble purpose of the United Nations, whose mission is to safeguard peace and justice in international relations.

Our people have excellent traditions and experience to draw on. We have in the past achieved unity for the sake of the common cause of the nation, transcending differences in ideologies, ideals, political viewpoints and religious beliefs. When the entire people in the north and the south of Korea and overseas compatriots renew the tradition of national unity, when they work

(Mr. Yon, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

together for the great unity of the nation, they will definitely realize the national priority of the task of reunification.

We regard North-South dialogue as the main means of peaceful reunification. We desire progress in the high-level North-South talks, to pave the way for the peaceful reunification of Korea. If the high-level North-South talks come to a fruitful conclusion, talks at the highest level will be feasible. The North-South dialogue must be a dialogue for reunification, not for division. The reunification of the country is a nationwide cause, which cannot be achieved simply by a special stratum of the North or the South. All parties and organizations and people of all sectors who desire national reunification should harmonize their demands and actions for the purpose of achieving solidarity and unity.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea proposes that a political consultative conference for national reunification be convened, possibly at an early date. Representatives of the Governments and of political parties and organizations in the North and in the South would participate, with a view to achieving nationwide agreement on the ways and means of reunification.

Although the north and the south of Korea have joined the United Nations separately, our position on national reunification is unchanged. Our people will actively strive to attain national reunification and thus unity of the whole nation, to bring closer the day when the reunified Korea will take one seat at the United Nations and contribute to the common cause of mankind. If a peaceful solution of the question of our national reunification is to be secured, the first and foremost task is to ensure peace on the Korean peninsula and to satisfy the prerequisites for peaceful reunification.

(Mr. Yon, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

We regard the adoption of the proposed North-South non-aggression declaration as the starting-point for removal of the military confrontation on the Korean peninsula and for a fundamental improvement in North-South relations.

On the Korean peninsula there stand, confronting one another across the military demarcation line, a million armed forces on full alert. The acute military confrontation on the Korean peninsula constitutes the main factor that spawns mistrust and misunderstanding between the North and the South. So long as the North and the South have their guns levelled at each other and keep daggers in their pockets, the situation will never be eased, and the tension on the Korean peninsula will not be removed.

We have long proposed the adoption of a non-aggression declaration between the North and the South as a direct step towards defusing the acute confrontation. If the non-aggression declaration is adopted it will help to open a decisive phase in replacing the unstable cease-fire system with a system of durable peace on the Korean peninsula and in easing the confrontation between the North and the South. We have proposed arms reductions in the North and the South, along with the adoption of the non-aggression declaration, with a view to ending military confrontation. Otherwise it will be impossible either to promote trust or to have a negotiated solution of the question of peaceful reunification between the north and the south of the Korean peninsula, where tension and the danger of war have reached a climax.

Our Government has already advanced comprehensive arms-reduction proposals for the Korean peninsula. We hold that the North and the South

(Mr. Yon, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

should suspend all joint military exercises with foreign forces and other large-scale military exercises in order to create an atmosphere of trust; should turn the demilitarized zone along the military demarcation line into a peace zone and enable it to be used for peaceful purposes; and should take security measures to prevent any accidental conflict that could lead to escalation.

We hold that, for the purpose of removing military confrontation, the North and the South should phase down their armed forces to fewer than 100,000 each within a period of three or four years; dissolve all civilian military organizations and civilian forces; cease the introduction of new military technological equipment and the development of armaments; and hold on-the-spot inspection to verify the implementation of arms-reduction measures.

The Government of our Republic has not only advanced a peace-oriented proposal for arms reduction but also taken the initiative of demobilizing a large number of its armed forces. To our regret, however, our peace initiatives remain unilateral efforts; reciprocal steps have not followed. We believe that if the North and the South agree upon the idea of arms reduction, and embark on the process, the danger of armed conflict and war on the Korean peninsula will be removed, distrust between the North and the South dispelled, and a favourable environment for peaceful reunification created.

Since the north and the south of Korea have both joined the United Nations we consider it necessary now to take measures to dissolve the "United Nations command" presence in South Korea, to have the "United Nations forces" withdrawn, and to replace the Korean armistice agreement with a peace agreement.

(Mr. Yon, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

For a durable peace in Korea, the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Korean peninsula now appears to be a realistic possibility. Out of our desire to eliminate the danger of nuclear war on the Korean peninsula and to contribute to durable peace and security in Asia and the rest of the world, we have put forward a proposal to turn the Korean peninsula into a zone free of nuclear weapons. Last July, the Government of the Republic put forward a new proposal, according to which the north and the south of Korea would agree on and jointly declare a nuclear-weapon-free zone on the Korean peninsula; the United States, the Soviet Union and China - the nuclear-weapon States neighbouring the Korean peninsula - would legally guarantee the nuclear-weapon-free status of the Korean peninsula once an agreement had been reached and a declaration adopted to this effect; and the non-nuclear-weapon States in Asia would support the conversion of the Korean peninsula into a nuclear-weapon-free zone and respect its nuclear-weapon-free status. Our new proposal has been welcomed by the nuclear-weapon States and the parties concerned.

We consider it necessary for the north and the south of Korea to pledge themselves before the world to a ban on the testing, manufacture and possession of nuclear weapons and to a prohibition on the deployment or transit of nuclear weapons and on nuclear military exercises on their territory. If the north and the south of Korea jointly declare the Korean peninsula to be a nuclear-weapon-free zone and the nuclear-weapon States neighbouring the Korean peninsula legally guarantee its nuclear-weapon-free status, the danger of nuclear war in Korea would undoubtedly be removed once and for all and the establishment of a durable peace would be assisted.

(Mr. Yon, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

With all clarity we reiterate that we have no intention of developing nuclear weapons, nor do we have the capability of so doing. The matter of nuclear inspections in our country cannot be resolved in isolation from the particular environment prevailing there: we expected that, as a matter of course, once our country adhered to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the nuclear threat against us would be removed. The reality, however, is quite contrary to our expectations, and we remain exposed to an ever-increasing nuclear threat. The military exercises known as "Team Spirit", which are staged annually south of the military demarcation line, are in fact a nuclear-war exercise targeted against us.

Ours is the only country in the world of the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons that is faced directly with a nuclear threat. That being the case, the matter of removing the nuclear threat is for us a vital question relating to our nation's right to survival.

According to the Treaty, the nuclear-weapon States commit themselves not to threaten the non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty. However, the problem cannot be resolved so long as the non-fulfilment of its Treaty obligation by the nuclear-weapon State which is now imposing a nuclear threat upon us is disregarded while at the same time we are being urged to agree to unilateral nuclear inspections even as we are exposed to nuclear threat.

The failure to conclude the nuclear safeguards agreement at the September meeting of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency may also be attributed to the "adoption" of the "resolution" intended to apply international pressure upon us, which is tantamount to interference in our internal affairs. It is our position that it is difficult to resolve the

(Mr. Yon, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

problem so long as the nuclear threat against us continues and the one-sided international pressure on us persists.

We welcome the announcement by President Bush that the United States will eliminate short-range nuclear weapons based on land and at sea, and hope that his proposal will be implemented as soon as possible. It is our expectation, in the light of this plan, that nuclear weapons in South Korea will be eliminated. If the United States does indeed withdraw its nuclear weapons from South Korea, the road will be open for us to conclude a nuclear safeguards agreement.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a peace-loving country, and the Korean people value peace highly. The Government of our Republic and our people will make every possible effort to ensure peace in Korea and to defend world peace, the common cause of mankind.

We are convinced that our national desire to ensure peace on the Korean peninsula and to achieve its independent and peaceful reunification will enjoy the support and sympathy of the States Members of the United Nations.

Independence, peace and friendship are the principal ideals of the foreign policy followed by the Government of our Republic. On the basis of these ideals, we shall promote friendship and unity with all the countries of the international community and shall make an active contribution to the cause of the United Nations for world peace and security, and shall do our utmost for the sound development of international relations and the further expansion and development of relations of friendship and cooperation between nations.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Premier of the Administrative Council of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Yon Hyong Muk, Premier of the Administrative Council of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, was escorted from the rostrum.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.